

# RACE TO THE TOP

## Delaware Report

Year 2: School Year 2011–2012

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U.S. Department of Education  
Washington, DC 20202

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February 1, 2013

# Executive Summary

## Race to the Top overview

On February 17, 2009, President Obama signed into law the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA), historic legislation designed to stimulate the economy, support job creation, and invest in critical sectors, including education. ARRA provided \$4.35 billion for the Race to the Top fund, of which approximately \$4 billion was used to fund comprehensive statewide reform grants under the Race to the Top program.<sup>1</sup> In 2010, the U.S. Department of Education (Department) awarded Race to the Top Phase 1 and Phase 2 grants to 11 States and the District of Columbia. The Race to the Top program is a competitive four-year grant program designed to encourage and reward States that are creating the conditions for education innovation and reform; achieving significant improvement in student outcomes, including making substantial gains in student achievement, closing achievement gaps, and improving high school graduation rates; and ensuring students are prepared for success in college and careers.

Since the Race to the Top Phase 1 and 2 competitions, the Department has made additional grants under Race to the Top Phase 3, Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge, and Race to the Top – District. In 2011, the Department awarded Phase 3 grants to seven additional States, which were finalists in the 2010 Race to the Top Phase 1 and Phase 2 competitions. Also in 2011, the Department made seven awards under the Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge to improve quality and expand access to early learning programs, and close the achievement gap for children with high needs. In 2012, four more States received Early Learning Challenge grants. Most recently, in 2012, the Department made awards to 16 applicants through the Race to the Top – District competition to support local educational agencies (LEAs) implementing locally developed plans to personalize and deepen student learning, directly improve student achievement and educator effectiveness, close achievement gaps, and prepare every student to succeed in college and career.

The Race to the Top program is built on the framework of comprehensive reform in four education reform areas:

- Adopting rigorous standards and assessments that prepare students for success in college and the workplace;
- Building data systems that measure student success and inform teachers and principals how they can improve their practices;
- Recruiting, developing, retaining, and rewarding effective teachers and principals; and
- Turning around the lowest-performing schools.

Since education is a complex system, sustained and lasting instructional improvement in classrooms, schools, LEAs, and States will not be achieved through piecemeal change. Race to the Top requires that States and LEAs participating in the State's Race to the Top plan (participating LEAs)<sup>2</sup> take into account their local context to design and implement the most effective and innovative approaches that meet the needs of their educators, students, and families.

## Race to the Top program review

As part of the Department's commitment to supporting States as they implement ambitious reform agendas, the Department established the Implementation and Support Unit (ISU) in the Office of the Deputy Secretary to administer, among others, the Race to the Top program. The goal of the ISU is to provide assistance to States as they implement unprecedented and comprehensive reforms to improve student outcomes. Consistent with this goal, the Department has developed a Race to the Top program review process that not only addresses the Department's responsibilities for fiscal and programmatic oversight, but is also designed to identify areas in which Race to the Top grantees need assistance and support to meet their goals. Specifically, the ISU works with Race to the Top grantees to differentiate support based on individual State needs, and helps States work with each other and with experts to achieve and sustain educational reforms that improve student outcomes. In partnership with the ISU, the Reform Support Network (RSN) offers collective and individualized technical assistance and resources to Race to the Top grantees. The RSN's purpose is to support Race to the Top grantees as they implement reforms in education policy and practice, learn from each other, and build their capacity to sustain these reforms.

Grantees are accountable for the implementation of their approved Race to the Top plans, and the information and data gathered throughout the program review help to inform the Department's management and support of the Race to the Top grantees, as well as provide appropriate and timely updates to the public on their progress. In the event that adjustments are required to an approved plan, the grantee must submit a formal amendment request to the Department for consideration. States may submit for Department approval amendment requests to a plan and budget, provided such changes do not significantly affect the scope or objectives of the approved plans. In the event that the Department determines that a grantee is not meeting its goals, activities, timelines, budget, or annual targets, or is not fulfilling other applicable requirements, the Department will take appropriate enforcement action(s), consistent with 34 CFR section 80.43 in the Education Department General Administrative Regulations (EDGAR).<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The remaining funds were awarded under the Race to the Top Assessment program. More information about the Race to the Top Assessment program is available at [www.ed.gov/programs/racetothetop-assessment](http://www.ed.gov/programs/racetothetop-assessment).

<sup>2</sup> Participating LEAs are those LEAs that choose to work with the State to implement all or significant portions of the State's Race to the Top plan, as specified in each LEA's Memorandum of Understanding with the State. Each participating LEA that receives funding under Title I, Part A will receive a share of the 50 percent of a State's grant award that the State must subgrant to LEAs, based on the LEA's relative share of Title I, Part A allocations in the most recent year, in accordance with section 14006(c) of the ARRA.

<sup>3</sup> More information about the ISU's program review process, State APR data, and State Scopes of Work can be found at <http://www2.ed.gov/programs/racetothetop/index.html>.

# Executive Summary

## State-specific summary report

The Department uses the information gathered during the review process (e.g., through monthly calls, onsite reviews, and Annual Performance Reports (APRs)) to draft State-specific summary reports.<sup>4</sup> The State-specific summary report serves as an assessment of a State's annual Race to the Top implementation. The Year 2 report for Phase 1 and 2 grantees highlights successes and accomplishments, identifies challenges, and provides lessons learned from implementation from approximately September 2011 through September 2012.

## State's education reform agenda

Delaware's 2009 strategic plan, created with input from more than 150 educators, parents, community members, funders, and supporters, is the State's blueprint for improving classroom instruction and ensuring that every student graduates college- and career-ready. The State's Race to the Top plan builds off of this blueprint and leverages the State's \$119,122,128 grant to catalyze and accelerate implementation of the strategic plan.

Delaware's broad goals under Race to the Top include setting high standards for college- and career-readiness; measuring progress with high quality assessments and robust data systems; recruiting, retaining, developing and supporting great teachers and leaders who can help all students meet high standards; building core capabilities to promote great teaching and leadership; accelerating improvements in the State's high-need schools; and building capacity at the State and local levels to deliver against goals. Delaware was one of the first two States to receive a Race to the Top grant, in July 2010.

## State Year 1 summary

The Delaware Department of Education (DDOE) built critical project management capacity to support LEAs and implement Race to the Top initiatives in Year 1. It created the Delivery Unit (DU), the Teacher and Leader Effectiveness Unit (TLEU), and the School Turnaround Unit (STU). In addition, it created the LEA Support Program to help LEAs develop and implement their plans. The State made key progress within each reform area, providing educators initial Common Core State Standards (CCSS) training, working to develop data system capabilities, and preparing for full implementation of programs to support teachers and principals. In Year 1, Delaware also launched the Partnership Zone (PZ) to turn around its lowest-achieving schools and selected four schools to implement PZ intervention plans in Year 2.

## State Year 2 summary

Despite some implementation challenges and delays during the second year of the grant, Delaware has made significant strides toward accomplishing its Race to the Top goals.

### Accomplishments

DDOE's performance management processes improved the quality of the State's implementation of its plans in Year 2. DDOE provided support to its LEAs to assist them in developing and implementing their Race to the Top plans. The DU in particular worked closely with LEAs to problem solve implementation challenges and encourage continuous improvement of their work. DDOE established strong routines to monitor progress and improve LEA performance, and has adapted its practices to better meet the needs of its LEAs. The progress monitoring and support routines created a feedback loop for DDOE and resulted in refinements to some statewide initiatives.

In addition, DDOE laid the groundwork for educators to fully implement the CCSS in Year 3 by providing professional development to more than 9,000 educators and developing curricular materials, such as model lesson plans. The State further supported educators to build students' college readiness through initiatives such as Advanced Placement (AP) Summer Institutes, which were attended by 79 educators, and statewide administration of the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) and Preliminary SAT (PSAT). Delaware students demonstrated increased readiness for college and careers in Year 2, with gains in proficiency across all major subgroups and statewide gains in ELA and mathematics in every grade-level band on the State assessment.<sup>5</sup>

Delaware teachers received evaluations in Year 2 based on the State's revised teacher evaluation system, the Delaware Performance Appraisal System II (DPAS II). Evaluations for teachers of tested grades and subjects included student growth scores; evaluations for teachers of non-tested grades and subjects will include a student growth component in Year 3. DDOE completed development of growth measures for non-tested grades and subjects in Year 2 and began implementing initiatives that use teacher and leader effectiveness data, such as Teacher Preparation Improvement grants and the Talent Retention Bonus Program (see *Great Teachers and Leaders*). DDOE supported school administrators through several specific leadership coaching initiatives aimed at increasing principals' instructional leadership skills.

Delaware worked to improve its teacher and leader pipelines by placing 27 Teach for America (TFA) teachers in classrooms in Year 2 and having six principals complete a Delaware Leadership Project

<sup>4</sup> Additional State-specific data on progress against annual performance measures and goals reported in the Year 2 APRs can be found on the Race to the Top Data Display at [www.rtt-apr.us](http://www.rtt-apr.us).

<sup>5</sup> For the State's student achievement data for SY 2011-2012, please see Delaware's APR at [www.rtt-apr.us](http://www.rtt-apr.us).

# Executive Summary

(DLP) residency. The Delaware Talent Management Project (DTMP) provided teacher pipelines and other services to five Wilmington-area charter schools, and DDOE began planning for the launch of a new statewide online educator recruitment portal and talent management system.

The State granted educators access to the Education Insight Portal in Year 2, a critical component of the Instructional Improvement Systems (IIS) that all LEAs implemented. The Education Insight Portal provides a set of data dashboards that visually represent key metrics for teachers and administrators. As a component of the IIS, 29 Data Coaches provided professional development on data-driven instruction to all core content teachers during weekly mandatory Professional Learning Communities (PLCs), which, according to the State, supported deeper conversations about how to use data to improve student outcomes.

DDOE supported school turnaround efforts by implementing PZ intervention plans in four schools and selecting another six schools to implement PZ intervention plans in Year 3.

## Challenges

Developing student growth measures for non-tested grades and subjects proved more challenging than anticipated, requiring the State to delay full implementation of DPAS II for one year from school year (SY) 2011-2012 to SY 2012-2013. This delay affected other areas and projects that depend on teacher effectiveness ratings, such as Human Capital Analytics and the Talent Transfer Initiative. Now that Delaware has developed student growth measures for non-tested grades and subjects, in Year 3 it is focusing on the critical step of communicating the measures to educators and moving forward on

other projects that are dependent on the State having student growth data for all educators.

DDOE experienced some delays in developing CCSS curricular materials. The State is still, however, on track to have educators fully implement the CCSS in Year 3.

In addition, DDOE launched the Education Insight Portal in Year 2 and piloted it with four LEAs, but stated it did not have significant teacher usage. The State is optimistic that its revised communications initiatives around the Education Insight Portal, combined with the launch of the second, expanded version of the Education Insight Portal will convince more educators to take advantage of the dashboard in Year 3.

Although it identified many potential improvements in Year 2, DDOE believes its supports and accountability structures can be improved and has made refinements to its internal performance management processes for Year 3. In addition, the State struggled to fully support all projects (see *Great Teachers and Leaders*) due to staff turnover, and is still working to fill critical positions.

## Looking ahead to Year 3

In Year 3, Delaware plans on fully implementing DPAS II and incorporating student growth measures for teachers of non-tested grades and subjects. It will fully implement the CCSS and college readiness programs including the Middle School Preparation Program. The Education Insight Portal will be available to all educators, as well as principals, district administrators, and DDOE staff. Delaware will continue to strive for continuous improvement by refining its programs based on educator feedback and its project management processes.

# State Success Factors

## Building capacity to support LEAs

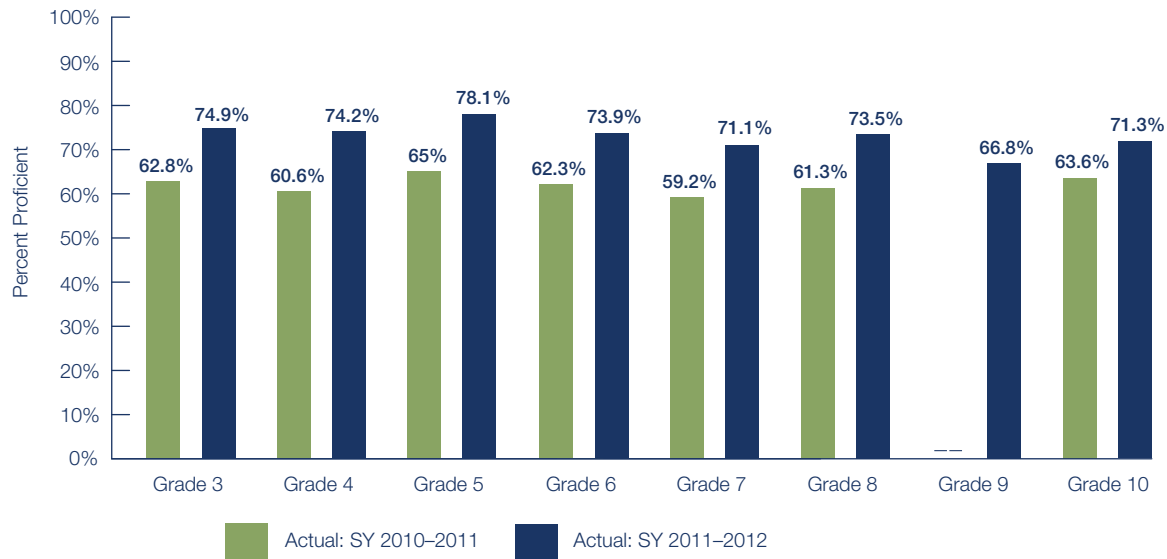
Delaware created LEA support structures and project management processes that enabled DDOE to work closely with all LEAs and to support data-driven improvements in teaching and learning. The DU, the State's project management office, oversaw progress across all education reform areas and coordinated Race to the Top monitoring for the State and LEAs. The DU also provided support to LEAs and served as the Race to the Top liaison between the State and the Department. The TLEU managed projects that deal with educator effectiveness and human capital more generally (see *Great Teachers and Leaders*), and the STU supported projects that focused on turning around the State's lowest-achieving schools (see *Turning Around the Lowest-Achieving Schools*). In addition, the Charter School Office separately monitored and supported Delaware's charter school initiatives. Staff responsible

for particular projects, known as Delivery Plan managers, have bi-monthly stocktake meetings to discuss progress with the DU and the State Secretary of Education. Delaware fully established and staffed the DU, TLEU, and STU in Year 1, but staff turnover prompted in part by the departure of the State Secretary of Education created several vacancies. At times, staff vacancies and capacity issues required DDOE to prioritize the implementation of some projects over others in Year 2.

In June 2012, the Governor appointed a new State Secretary of Education, who has subsequently on-boarded a number of new staff members to support DDOE's implementation efforts. DDOE will fill the remaining vacancies in the early part of Year 3, including key positions such as the Chief Officer of the STU and the Chief Academic Officer.

# State Success Factors

## Student Proficiency on Delaware's ELA Assessment

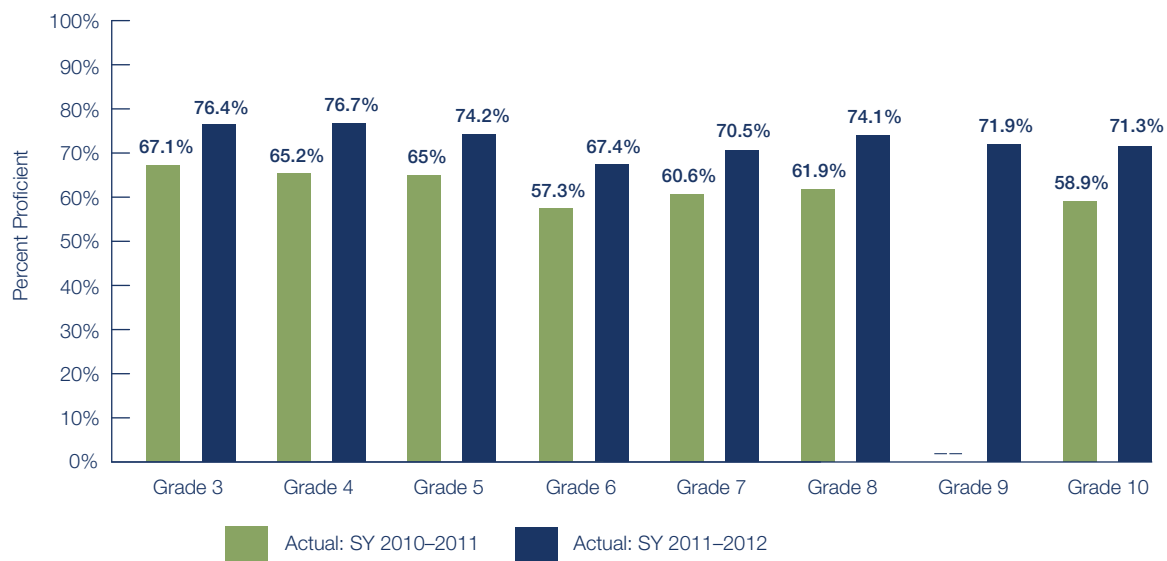


Preliminary SY 2011-2012 data reported as of: August 27, 2012

NOTE: Over the last two years, a number of States adopted new assessments and/or cut scores.

For State-reported context, please refer to the Race to the Top APR at [www.rtt-apr.us](http://www.rtt-apr.us).

## Student Proficiency on Delaware's Mathematics Assessment



Preliminary SY 2011-2012 data reported as of: August 27, 2012

NOTE: Over the last two years, a number of States adopted new assessments and/or cut scores.

For State-reported context, please refer to the Race to the Top APR at [www.rtt-apr.us](http://www.rtt-apr.us).



# State Success Factors

## Support and accountability for LEAs

DDOE's LEA support and accountability structures ensured ongoing, targeted, and comprehensive support to LEAs in Year 2 through LEA progress reviews, annual performance evaluations, and other regular meetings and site visits. Through these structures, the State helped LEAs develop and implement Race to the Top supported projects; track performance indicators; identify performance challenges and strengths; support problem solving; and engage local leadership.

DDOE monitored LEA implementation throughout Year 2 by conducting a fall or spring LEA progress review (or both) for its 19 LEAs.<sup>6</sup> The State assessed LEAs' progress against their Scopes of Work during these reviews, and provided support as needed. Spring progress reviews included educator focus groups, as well as an observation of at least one PLC (see *Data Systems to Support Instruction*) and one district-specific Race to the Top initiative. During the reviews, DDOE staff met with LEA leadership to discuss programmatic strengths and identify opportunities to strengthen implementation. Following the reviews, DDOE created LEA progress reports and a summary of progress across the State's LEAs.

Also in Year 2, DDOE completed its annual end-of-year performance evaluations for its 19 LEAs. The evaluations assessed LEAs' progress in implementing Race to the Top projects and identified challenges through a data-driven approach. In preparation for the review, DDOE reviewed LEA-submitted materials and information from previous reviews, prepared and analyzed a data dashboard for each LEA, and checked performance indicators against system-wide goals. DDOE set expectations for Year 3 and developed recommendations for each LEA based on the results of the review. The Charter School Office conducted parallel support and monitoring efforts for participating charter school LEAs.

Beyond progress reviews and performance evaluations, DDOE provided support to LEAs through monthly Chiefs' meetings in which LEA leaders analyzed and discussed their data regarding a specific Race to the Top initiative. DDOE also provided LEAs with State liaisons who participated in Race to the Top monitoring and conducted regular check-ins with their assigned LEAs, as well as participated in regular trainings and feedback sessions at DDOE. Furthermore, DDOE coordinated cross-LEA initiatives based on LEA interests and needs, and provided online resources focused on examples of best practices within and outside of Delaware.

Delaware identified some areas for improvement among its LEA support and accountability efforts. In particular, the State acknowledged the need to improve its capacity to more effectively identify problems and to make needed changes. As a result, the DU began working with a contractor to ensure that it systematically tracks progress through measures that align with student achievement.

In Year 2, Delaware contributed to "Effective Approaches to Collaboration: Models of Partnerships, Networks and Collaborative Strategies," a RSN publication that seeks to spread best practices on supporting and collaborating with LEAs.<sup>7</sup> Delaware shared information about how State agencies can promote LEA collaboration, capacity, and buy-in.

<sup>6</sup>The Charter School Office coordinates monitoring and support of Delaware's 19 charter schools that are participating LEAs in Race to the Top. This is separate from the monitoring that DDOE does with its 19 non-charter school LEAs.

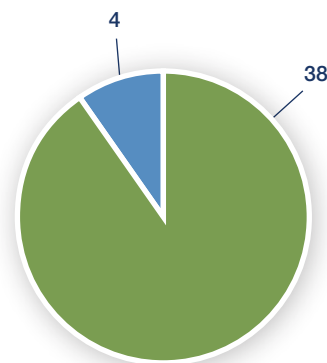
<sup>7</sup>RSN publications can be found at <http://www2.ed.gov/about/inits/ed/implementation-support-unit/tech-assist/index.html>.

# State Success Factors

## LEA participation

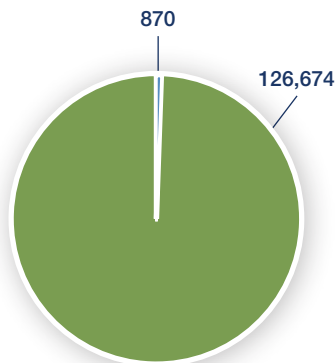
As depicted in the graphs below, Delaware reported 38 participating LEAs in Year 2 (19 LEAs and 19 charter school LEAs). When Delaware applied for Race to the Top funding, this number represented 100 percent of LEAs in the State. As of June 30, 2012, this represents over 99.3 percent of the State's kindergarten through twelfth grade (K-12) students and over 99.6 percent of its students in poverty.<sup>8</sup>

LEAs Participating in Delaware's Race to the Top Plan



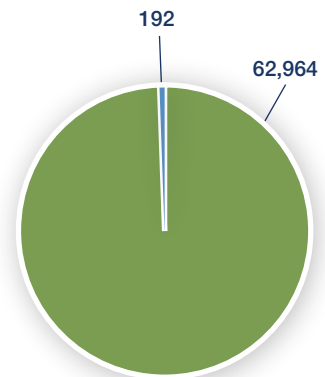
■ Participating LEAs (#)  
■ Other LEAs

K-12 Students in LEAs Participating in Delaware's Race to the Top Plan



■ K-12 Students (#) in participating LEAs  
■ K-12 Students (#) in other LEAs

Students in Poverty in LEAs Participating in Delaware's Race to the Top Plan



■ Students in Poverty (#) in participating LEAs  
■ Students in Poverty (#) in other LEAs

For State-reported context, please refer to the Race to the Top APR at [www.rtt-apr.us](http://www.rtt-apr.us).

## Stakeholder engagement

### Key activities and stakeholders

Delaware's leadership team, composed of the Governor, the State Secretary of Education, and leadership from the Delaware State Education Association, supported and were deeply engaged with the State's Race to the Top plan in Year 2. Other key stakeholders, including leaders of the Rodel Foundation and the State's institutions of higher education (IHEs), also were engaged in the reform efforts.

The State maintained frequent contact with LEAs, as described above. Specifically, DDOE utilized Chiefs' meetings, progress reviews, and performance evaluations to disseminate information and share feedback about implementation progress. DDOE liaisons conducted separate outreach as needed, including conducting LEA

site visits. The DDOE regularly sent memos and "e-blasts" to all local superintendents, charter leaders, and principals. In addition, the State used telephone town hall events to share major updates such as policy announcements regarding student achievement results and educator evaluations (see *Great Teachers and Leaders*).

### Continuous improvement

Delaware focused on continuous improvement by establishing a network of feedback loops between LEAs, educators, and DDOE's project management structures. For instance, the State used surveys after each Chiefs' meeting to assess the quality of the meetings, and solicited qualitative feedback from its liaisons during monthly meetings.

<sup>8</sup> Participating LEAs include all LEAs and charter schools in the State with the exception of charter schools opened after the beginning of SY 2009-2010.

# State Success Factors

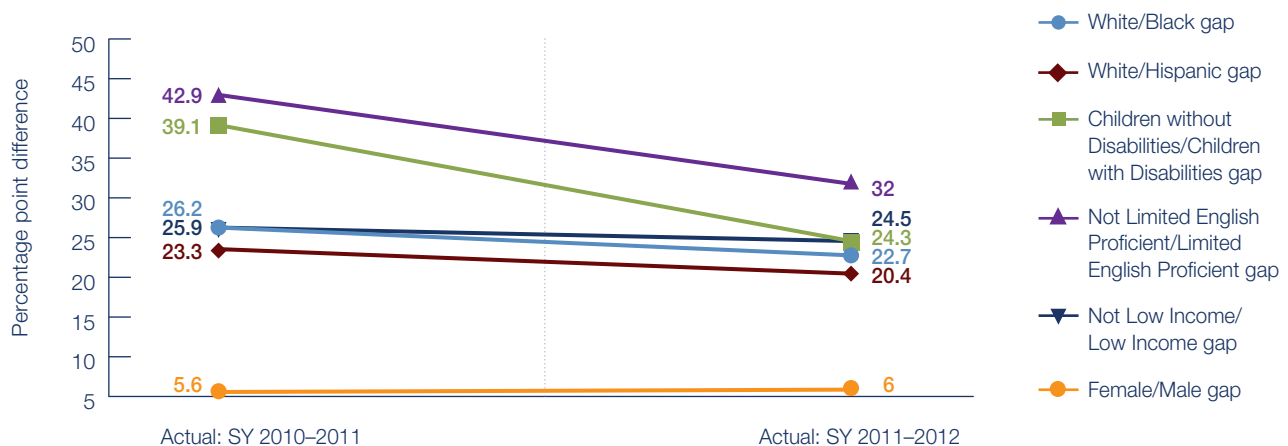
Progress assessments of the State's Race to the Top projects also helped DDOE continuously improve its reform efforts. For example, stakeholder feedback and DDOE's assessment of implementation motivated the State to revise and strengthen its CCSS implementation plan (see *Standards and Assessments*). DDOE revised its service delivery model for Data Coaches (see *Data Systems to Support Instruction*) to include the provision of support for CCSS implementation efforts and the rollout of the Education Insight dashboards. Data Coaches received training from DDOE and are currently in the field providing direct support to LEAs and schools in these key areas. DDOE informed the development and subsequent refinements of its Education Insight Portal based on stakeholder feedback. An advisory group oversaw the portal's development to ensure that it meets educator needs and preferences, and a survey on the ease of accessing data will continue to inform future improvements (see *Data Systems to Support Instruction*). Districts expressed capacity challenges with the implementation of the statewide teacher evaluation system and voiced a need for additional supports to ensure administrators were well-prepared to carry out the process. In response, DDOE has sought funding to extend development coach support for an additional year beyond what was initially planned.

## Successes, challenges, and lessons learned

Delaware created strong project management processes to monitor Race to the Top implementation. It used processes such as Delivery Plans, regular meetings, and LEA performance evaluations to monitor progress, collect stakeholder feedback, and identify areas for improvement. DDOE has established systems to provide ongoing and targeted support to its LEAs to assist them in developing and implementing their Race to the Top projects.

Despite the fact that its support and accountability processes led to program improvements in Year 2, DDOE continues to scrutinize its processes for supporting LEAs in order to more effectively identify problems and potential solutions. Key vacancies at DDOE at times limited its ability to provide comprehensive support for all projects in Year 2; the State aims to fill these positions early in Year 3.

Achievement Gap on Delaware's ELA Assessment



Preliminary SY 2011-2012 data reported as of: August 27, 2012

NOTE: Over the last two years, a number of States adopted new assessments and/or cut scores.

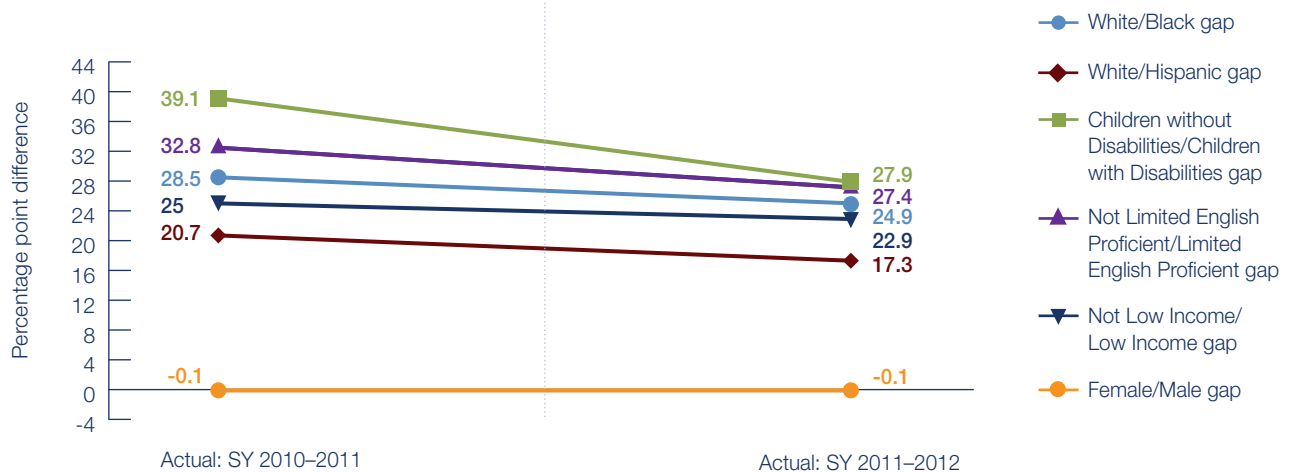
Numbers in the graph represent the gap in a school year between two subgroups on the State's ELA assessment. Achievement gaps were calculated by subtracting the percent of students scoring proficient in the lower-performing subgroup from the percent of students scoring proficient in the higher-performing subgroup to get the percentage point difference between the proficiency of the two subgroups. If the achievement gap narrowed between two subgroups, the line will slope downward. If the achievement gap increased between two subgroups, the line will slope upward.

For State-reported context, please refer to the Race to the Top APR at [www.rtt-apr.us](http://www.rtt-apr.us).



# State Success Factors

## Achievement Gap on Delaware's Mathematics Assessment



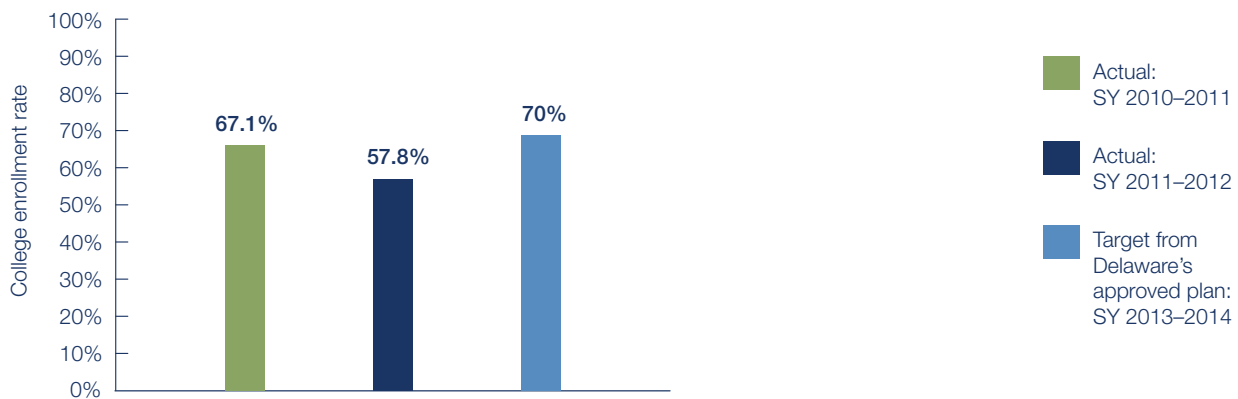
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For State-reported context, please refer to the Race to the Top APR at [www.rtt-apr.us](http://www.rtt-apr.us).

## College Enrollment Rates



Preliminary SY 2011-2012 data reported as of: October 25, 2012

For State-reported context, please refer to the Race to the Top APR at [www.rtt-apr.us](http://www.rtt-apr.us).

# Standards and Assessments

Implementing rigorous college- and career-ready standards and assessments that prepare students for success in college and career is an integral aspect of education reform in all Race to the Top States.

## Supporting the transition to college- and career-ready standards and high-quality assessments

### Adopting standards and developing assessments

The Delaware Board of Education adopted the CCSS in English language arts (ELA) and mathematics in August 2010. The State dedicated Year 2 to completing model curriculum and resource development. In Year 3, Delaware educators will fully implement the CCSS in grades K-12.

The State became a governing member of the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium (Smarter Balanced) in September 2011. Delaware reported that its commitment to Smarter Balanced enables it to align its assessment consortium work with the Delaware Comprehensive Assessment System (DCAS).

Based on educator and LEA feedback, DDOE decided to strengthen its CCSS plan in Year 2. To support this effort, DDOE secured additional State funding and instituted a Common Core Steering Committee of experts and stakeholders that met four times between March and June 2012. The Committee developed a CCSS transition strategy to focus and guide CCSS implementation, dividing the transition efforts into three key areas: curriculum, assessment, and instruction. For curriculum, over the course of the SY 2012-2013, the State will support LEA alignment of curricular materials and provide open-source ELA and mathematics resources to all LEAs. In the area of assessment, in August 2012, DDOE developed a CCSS website that includes sample CCSS-aligned test items, and created an additional spring 2013 assessment experience that mirrors the content, format, and rigor of the new Smarter Balanced assessment in preparation for the launch of the new assessments in SY 2014-2015. The website was designed to support LEAs' CCSS implementation efforts and serve as a centralized platform for resources such as video banks of aligned instruction and curricular materials for educators. For instruction, DDOE provided professional development to educators to ensure that changes in instructional practice correspond to the CCSS. DDOE also developed a CCSS implementation plan that provides action steps and timelines for this work. As a result of these efforts, DDOE streamlined projects, expanded professional development, and tied CCSS professional development trainings to educator evaluation expectations.

Delaware's collaboration with other Race to the Top States also informed the State's efforts to improve CCSS implementation. In January 2012, Delaware attended the RSN's convening with 11 other Race to the Top States to discuss strategies to align educator

effectiveness initiatives with CCSS implementation. The State also attended a similar convening of Race to the Top States that specifically focused on professional development in April 2012.

In Year 2, Delaware coupled DCAS implementation with professional development for teams of principals and teacher leaders. Between January and March 2012, the State offered 16 full-day sessions that aimed to help teachers understand how to use DCAS data to differentiate instruction. Following the trainings, participants relayed the knowledge back to their schools with the aid of a DDOE-furnished materials kit. DDOE further supported the effective use of DCAS data through online tutorials on educator-requested topics, as well as by disseminating fact sheets.

### Supporting college readiness

Delaware supported college readiness by implementing a statewide college readiness examination and designing programs to help teachers meet college-ready standards.

During Year 2, the State continued to require that all 11th-grade public school students take the SAT each year. The State administered the SAT during the regular school day at no cost to students. Student participation in the SAT increased from 95 percent in Year 1 to 98 percent in Year 2.

Delaware also increased college readiness by supporting its educators through its AP Summer Institutes, designed to give AP teachers experience in developing and teaching core AP courses such as biology, calculus, physics, and U.S. history. The State selected courses for the Summer Institutes based on which had the least amount of Delaware students with passing scores in Year 1. In summer 2012, 79 teachers attended one of the two available Summer Institutes. The State also created a follow-up course for teachers who attended the Summer Institutes in Year 1 to help them understand how to analyze data to inform teaching and learning. Summer 2012 attendees will complete a similar follow-up course in Year 3.

Delaware also worked on two initiatives to prepare middle school students to eventually meet college-ready standards. As part of the AP Summer Institute, middle school teachers participated in four Pre-AP Vertical Team core courses in July and August 2012 to learn how to prepare their students for rigorous high school coursework. A total of 79 teachers participated in the 2012 AP Summer Institute. The State also prepared to launch its Middle School Preparation Program by providing professional development to teachers and collecting data from each LEA regarding participating students. LEAs that participate in the Middle School Preparation Program may choose to implement one of four approved programs with a demonstrated record of increasing scores on college readiness examinations. The program will target high-need and low-achieving students.

# Standards and Assessments

In addition, the Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) Council, which meets quarterly to promote and spread best practices in STEM education, issued a report outlining recommendations and a vision for future STEM initiatives (see *Emphasis on Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics*).

## Dissemination of resources and professional development

Delaware prepared its educators to implement the CCSS by developing instructional materials and providing professional development. The State disseminated these resources through a dedicated clearinghouse and systematically tracked professional development registration through its Professional Development Management System.

Although the State trained 9,000 educators in the State (94 percent of all teachers) on the CCSS in Years 1 and 2, its feedback loops indicated that some educators felt they could benefit from additional training and support. In response, DDOE created Cadre Groups of ELA and mathematics practitioners, DDOE staff, and higher education personnel to develop additional professional development modules, which were delivered through PLCs and school-based workshops. Additionally, DDOE provided CCSS training to educators focused on topics such as the new CCSS writing rubrics, aligning informational and literary texts to appropriate grade levels, and content area literacy. Additionally, DDOE provided training on the CCSS to all 29 Data Coaches (see *Data Systems to Support Instruction*), who will be deployed during fall 2012 to serve as “ambassadors” for CCSS implementation to educators statewide.

DDOE’s instructional materials further supported CCSS implementation. DDOE created model lessons in both ELA and mathematics using the Literacy Concept Organizers and Math Learning Progressions frameworks. In Year 2, Delaware completed the development, piloted the lessons, and posted them on a State website in June 2012.

DDOE made progress toward, but did not meet, its goal of completing the curriculum alignment process by the end of Year 2. DDOE’s review of LEA alignment processes and tools revealed that some LEAs were in need of continued assistance to improve the quality of their resources. DDOE responded by holding nine ELA Curriculum Alignment Content Framework sessions during summer 2012, and planned to hold additional sessions in fall 2012 to ensure its 19 LEAs received training in the ELA Curriculum Alignment Content Framework and to support the mathematics alignment initiative. The State will continue to provide professional development on curriculum alignment in Year 3.

## Successes, challenges, and lessons learned

Delaware demonstrated its commitment to high-quality CCSS implementation by identifying and responding to potential areas for improvement. Although the State conducted professional development and provided resources in Years 1 and 2, the completion of some of the model curricular materials was delayed. In addition, the State received feedback from some stakeholders that it should strengthen its CCSS plan. Delaware revised its CCSS plan based on feedback from stakeholders, including educators, other Race to the Top States, and its own needs assessments. The State allocated additional resources to professional development and instructional materials, which enabled Delaware to expand its professional development agenda and complete previously-delayed curricular resources by the end of Year 2.

The State achieved its goals for the Year 2 DCAS and DCAS-Alt administrations in both implementation and results. Delaware met all of its milestones for development, administration, and participation. Most importantly, Delaware students demonstrated statewide student gains in ELA and mathematics in every grade-level band, as well as a narrowing of many achievement gaps. The State also provided support to help educators use DCAS data. It provided 16 full-day training sessions, online tutorials, and other resources.

Delaware took several key steps to ensure that its students will have access to resources that prepare them for college or the workforce. Statewide SAT implementation will help all schools assess their students’ college and career readiness, thereby enabling them to more effectively identify ways to improve instruction. In addition, the State worked to help its educators prepare students for college and career success through the AP Summer Institutes, and the Middle School Preparation Program.

# Data Systems to Support Instruction

Statewide longitudinal data systems (SLDS) and IIS enhance the ability of States to effectively manage, use, and analyze education data to support instruction. Race to the Top States are working to ensure that their data systems are accessible to key stakeholders and that the data support educators and decision-makers in their efforts to improve instruction and increase student achievement.

## Fully implementing an SLDS

To support its SLDS, Delaware is creating a unified data warehouse that will feature standardized codes and definitions to enable integration of State data from pre-kindergarten through higher education. In Year 2, the State completed the development of the unified data warehouse, which collects information from 33 data sets.

In Year 2, the State also developed several key data system capabilities to promote interoperability. It completed its alignment of high school academic and elective codes ahead of schedule, and is working to complete common codes for middle school courses in Year 3. In addition, it deployed the first phase of the Student Data Exchange, which facilitates student transcript sharing between LEAs and colleges or universities. The State also implemented the Identity Management System, which allows stakeholders to access information based on their specific role (*e.g.*, teacher, administrator). The system has about 15,000 registered users. Delaware also approved a data governance handbook in January 2012, which provides a framework for interagency data governance policies and procedures.

## Accessing and using State data

Delaware's Education Insight Portal, one component of the State's IIS, is a unique set of data dashboards that visually represent key metrics for teachers and administrators. The Teacher and Administrator Insight Dashboards give teachers and administrators, respectively, access to State and local student performance, assessment, and demographic data – both current and historical – through a single sign-on. The Insight Dashboards differentiate access by stakeholder group (*e.g.*, teachers and principals) and have a unique focus on research-based metrics, such as an early-warning indicator for high school drop-outs that “flags” students who meet the associated criteria for being at-risk. In Year 2, the State finished developing 31 dashboard metrics built from student-level data that can be aggregated by class, school, district, and State to flag students who require instructional interventions.

Four LEAs piloted the Education Insight Portal between April and June 2012. The pilot program informed DDOE of user needs, the required level of support, and accuracy of data. Based on the results, DDOE modified the Insight Dashboards to make them more user-friendly. All teachers gained access to the Teacher Insight Dashboard in July 2012. School and LEA administrators received access in September 2012, and State administrators will have access in spring

2013. The State also began administering a quarterly survey in July 2012 to measure users' ease of data access. Based on its analysis of the results, DDOE will continue to identify ways to improve users' experiences.

## Using data to improve instruction

Delaware's IIS will provide educators with the resources and skills they need to improve instruction. In addition to the Education Insight Portal, the IIS will be supported by implementation of PLCs and support from Data Coaches who focus on data-driven instruction. In Year 2, the State met its goal of having every school in participating LEAs develop a State-certified IIS plan indicating how it would implement the various components of the State-defined IIS.

The State provided extensive training and support to ensure that educators could maximize the new data tools. In Year 2, Delaware LEAs implemented weekly 90-minute PLCs focused on data-informed instruction, including using data from the Education Insight Portal. These PLCs reached every core content public school teacher in the State.

The State also provided support through Data Coaches who were responsible for building educator and LEA capacity to use data to inform assessment and instruction. The State hired 29 Data Coaches in Year 1, conducted a five-LEA pilot, and assigned each coach by the beginning of Year 2 to specific schools and LEAs. LEAs selected one of two models for data coach implementation: a direct facilitation model or a coach-the-coach model. Direct facilitation placed State-provided coaches directly in PLCs, while coach-the-coach involved State-provided coaches training other LEA personnel, who in turn lead PLCs at the school level. Sixty percent of Delaware schools selected the coach-the-coach model, and 40 percent selected the direct facilitation model.

In Year 1, the State had concerns about LEAs' implementation of the Data Coach Project and PLC implementation. Some schools and educators faced challenges scheduling the required 90 minutes of PLC time. As a result, in Year 2 the State hired a coach-the-coach coordinator to conduct a needs assessment of each PLC, beginning with LEAs that use the coach-the-coach model. DDOE also monitored the PLCs and Data Coaches to provide timely feedback for Delaware's educators, as well as to improve the quality of project implementation. DDOE analyzed PLC survey results that were collected during Year 2, and will make changes to the PLCs and Data Coach Project based upon participant feedback.



# Data Systems to Support Instruction

## Successes, challenges, and lessons learned

Delaware made progress on its data-related projects in Year 2. The State completed the development of its unified data warehouse, including components that are essential for system interoperability such as common course codes and the Student Data Exchange. The State finished developing the Education Insight Portal in Year 2, and will take these data from the warehouse to the classrooms in Year 3 to enable teachers and administrators to more easily access and use data to inform instructional decisions. Data Coaches provided extensive professional development through PLCs with the aim of helping teachers and administrators understand how to use data most effectively. Moving forward, the State's needs assessment will help improve LEA implementation of the Data Coach and PLC initiatives.

Although the State did not face many delays and implemented its plan with fidelity, Delaware recognized a need to enhance its efforts to get LEAs and educators to take full advantage of the Education Insight Portal. (Currently, many administrators and educators in the State use a different system purchased by the LEAs.) DDOE is working to ensure that educators receive sufficient training and communication regarding the dashboards so that they are able to understand the utility of the system and its application to their daily practice. In addition, the State is identifying “champions” who use the tool and are willing to share their positive experiences with other educators. Delaware is optimistic that LEAs and educators will better understand the Education Insight Portal's utility and therefore take advantage of it more frequently in Year 3. The State is conducting ongoing needs assessments to see how Data Coaches and PLCs might most effectively show educators how to use the dashboards and is bolstering communication efforts by identifying educators who can serve as peer examples of effective system use.

## Great Teachers and Leaders

Race to the Top States are developing comprehensive systems of educator effectiveness by adopting clear approaches to measuring student growth; designing and implementing rigorous, transparent, and fair evaluation systems for teachers and principals; conducting annual evaluations that include timely and constructive feedback; and using evaluation information to inform professional development, compensation, promotion, retention, and tenure decisions. In addition, Race to the Top States are providing high-quality pathways for aspiring teachers and principals, ensuring equitable distribution of effective teachers and principals, improving the effectiveness of teacher and principal preparation programs, and providing effective supports to all educators.

### Providing high-quality pathways for aspiring teachers and principals

In 2011, Delaware created and launched its first alternative route to principal certification, the DLP, where participants work side-by-side with mentor principals to complete coursework and a 10-month residency. The first cohort of six principals completed this program in Year 2, and LEAs hired five of them to serve as assistant principals in Year 3. DLP's second cohort recruitment efforts attracted a high level of interest, with 112 applications submitted. Of these, the State selected six to complete the residency and program in Year 3.

Delaware's Race to the Top plan included support for alternative-route pathways to teacher preparation and certification such as TFA, the STEM Residency Program, and the Delaware Teaching Fellows (DTF) in Year 2. Twenty-seven TFA corps members were placed in high-need schools in Year 2, meeting DDOE's self-established contractual target.

The STEM Residency Program placed eight new teachers in schools in Year 2 and trained an additional six for Year 3 placement. However, cohorts have been smaller than expected, and DDOE does not anticipate it will to meet its goal of certifying 100 non-traditional candidates through the program by Year 4, as only 16 were certified by the end of Year 2 (see *Emphasis on Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics*).

DTF recruits completed their first year of teaching in Year 2. The program was highly selective, choosing 27 candidates from among hundreds of applicants. Eighteen of these teachers secured positions in high-need schools in Year 2. However, Delaware decided to phase out the DTF after Year 2 due to concerns about recruitment, hiring, and sustainability, as well as a desire to focus resources on programs with stronger records of success such as TFA and DLP moving forward.



# Great Teachers and Leaders

As a result of DTF's closure and lower-than-expected STEM Residency Program participation, Delaware plans to expand its TFA and DLP programs to compensate for the reduction in numbers of educators with alternative route pathways to certification, and will continue to explore other options to meet its goals.

The DTMP, formerly known as the Model Staffing Initiative, combines a certified teacher talent pipeline with other human resource supports. In Year 2, five charter schools participated in the program that helps schools develop a teacher recruitment pipeline, provides school leadership coaching, and assesses human capital practices through a school instructional culture survey.

## Improving teacher and principal effectiveness based on performance

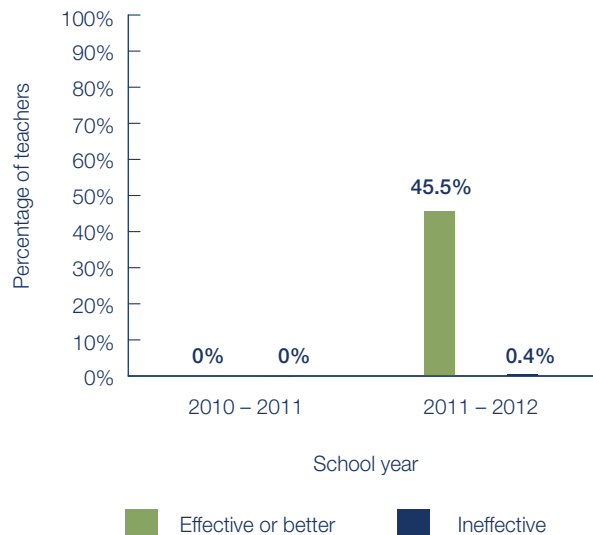
Delaware's teacher and principal evaluation system, the DPAS II, has five components that identify separate areas of teacher, specialist, and administrator practice and responsibility. The following are the five core components of DPAS II: Planning and Preparation, Classroom Environment, Instruction, Professional Responsibilities, and Student Improvement. Within each of the first four categories, the DPAS II standards specify several elements of effective practice along with observable knowledge and skills. Evaluators may use an observation rubric to score teachers on a four-level scale. The ratings for all five categories are combined to assign educators to one of four performance levels: Highly Effective, Effective, Needs Improvement, and Ineffective.

The Student Improvement component, Component V, measures the growth of each educator's students. DDOE invested substantial effort and resources into Component V's development, especially into determining how to evaluate educators in non-tested grades and subjects. Initially, Delaware intended to give all educators a Component V score in Year 2, but the State determined that it needed more time to fully develop growth measures for non-DCAS subjects. As a result, only teachers in DCAS subjects (grades 3-10 ELA and mathematics) received a Component V score in Year 2.

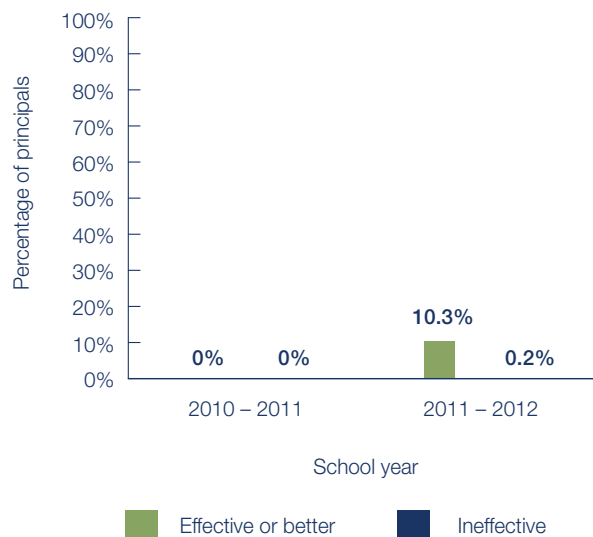
To address non-tested grades and subjects, DDOE submitted and received approval to postpone Component V's role in tenure, advancement, and dismissal decisions until Year 3. During Year 2, more than 500 teachers participated in Delaware's process to create assessments that could reliably measure student growth for Component V for non-tested grades and subjects. The State finished its work on Component V in time to fully implement DPAS II for all educators in Year 3.

In Year 2, Delaware fully implemented its evaluation system for all teachers of DCAS subjects, and Component V scores were provided for ELA and mathematics teachers in August 2012. All parts of DPAS II except for Component V were implemented for teachers of non-DCAS subjects.

Percentage of teachers in participating LEAs with qualifying evaluation systems who were evaluated as effective or better or ineffective in the prior academic year



Percentage of principals in participating LEAs with qualifying evaluation systems who were evaluated as effective or better or ineffective in the prior academic year



For State-reported context, please refer to the Race to the Top APR at [www.rtt-apr.us](http://www.rtt-apr.us).

# Great Teachers and Leaders

Fully developing Component V in Year 2 was a significant achievement for Delaware, but the State's communication and professional development at the start of Year 3 will be critical to ensuring that educators understand the new student growth measures. To that end, DDOE conducted extensive outreach in August 2012 by holding four full-day training sessions for four-member teams from each school, creating online modules, and releasing updated guides to DPAS II.

In July 2012, the State also created new policy regarding determining Component V for administrators. Beginning in SY 2012-2013 (Year 3 of the grant), Component V of DPAS II for administrators will be comprised of two parts equally weighted. Part A will be based on the State's Component V calculation formula for students who are DCAS-tested in ELA and Math. Part B will be based upon other State-recommended measures, current school measures pertaining to student achievement, or other district priority student achievement measures.

Delaware monitored DPAS II implementation quality through feedback collection and routine monitoring. Using onsite monitoring protocols and procedures, the State visited over 90 percent of LEAs for a half-day onsite monitoring visit. DDOE used interviews and focus groups to gather feedback from teachers, principals, and development coaches about DPAS II.

In Year 2, Delaware also launched its Development Coach program, and hired nine development coaches to guide principals and assistant principals through the teacher evaluation process to ensure that the new DPAS II evaluation system is implemented with fidelity and consistency. Feedback suggested that stakeholders were appreciative of the development coaches' support in implementing DPAS II.

## Ensuring equitable distribution of effective teachers and principals

The Talent Retention Bonus Program provides financial awards to teachers and school leaders who earn an "Exceeds" rating on DPAS II, Component V (in addition to strong ratings in Components I-IV), and commit to staying in their high-need schools for at least two additional years. Although the identification of eligible schools and educators was delayed by several months due to DPAS II delays, the State still identified 24 teachers and four school administrators from approximately ten high-need schools who were eligible for the \$10,000 bonus and will be paid over two years beginning in SY 2012-2013, according to established timelines.

DPAS II's delays impacted another program that depends on evaluation ratings, the Talent Transfer Initiative. Through the program, Delaware will offer financial incentives and professional development to teachers and leaders rated highly on DPAS II who elect to transfer to a high-need school. DDOE intends to launch the program's first cohort based on Year 2 evaluation results, to begin work at new schools in SY 2013-2014. This project is now a year delayed and will be implemented in Year 3.

Delaware also rewarded high-performing schools through the Academic Achievement Award program. Five schools earned \$150,000 awards in Year 2 based on their progress on either "adequate yearly progress" (AYP) targets or closing achievement gaps. Delaware will select recipients of the third round of Academic Achievement Awards in fall 2012 based on progress made during Year 2.

At the end of Year 2, the State was in the final stages of selecting a vendor for its new Teacher Recruitment Portal. The portal faced delays in the first two years due to a longer-than-expected process of gathering stakeholder feedback and the need to hire a new staff member to oversee the portal's development. Although this project is delayed, the State is optimistic that its outreach and marketing will help the portal exceed its goals in Years 3 and 4 regarding the number of users, the percentage of LEAs posting vacancies and positions, and an increase in the number of applications for teaching positions.

DPAS II's full implementation in Year 3 will significantly improve the State's ability to assess the distribution of effective teachers and inform improvements in many areas.

# Great Teachers and Leaders

## Improving the effectiveness of teacher and principal preparation programs

Delaware intends to create a Teacher Preparation Improvement grant program that will expand teacher and leader preparation programs with successful records. These grants will be informed by the Human Capital Analytics Diagnostic report, which has been delayed by a year due to the resignation of a key data analyst and the time-intensive nature of mining human capital data in Delaware. In Year 2, DDOE completed a comprehensive list of desired data points and metrics for the report and hired a replacement data analyst. It anticipates finishing the report early in Year 3. The report will contain detailed information on the status of Delaware's teacher preparation programs, including the effectiveness of each program's graduates based on student performance data, and will inform the grants selection process.

## Providing effective support to teachers and principals

The Vision Network, 26 participating schools that meet monthly to share best practices, further supported effective professional development around leadership teams, student culture, and the observation and instructional feedback cycle. Four additional schools will join the Vision Network in Year 3.

DDOE's School Administration Managers (SAMs) initiative deployed SAMs in 28 schools in Year 2. This service provides school-based leadership with time-tracking software, feedback on time management, and the administrative support they need in order to make their primary focus instructional leadership. Participating schools select one of two SAM models. The most commonly selected model provides time-tracking software for the school and training for the building's existing administrative assistant, along with a stipend to this individual for assuming time management responsibilities. The other model supports the hiring of a full-time position to take on operational responsibilities, allowing the principal to spend more time on instructional leadership activities. Delaware's goal is to increase principals' use of time for instruction by 12 percent through the use of SAM services. At the end of its first full year of implementation, the SAM project exceeded all targets, including increasing the average time spent on instructional responsibilities among principals in 17 of 28 SAM schools. Of the four schools where principals' time on instructional responsibilities decreased the most, three will have new principals next year. Among principals with full-time operational support, principals increased instructional time by 20 percentage points.

School Leadership Coaches (SLCs) provided eight weekly hours of leadership coaching to principals in participating schools. In Year 2, DDOE's vendor trained five coaches and placed them in

## Family and Community Engagement

As part of the State's goal to ensure equitable distribution of teachers, Delaware is investing in projects to improve school environments. Delaware supported parental and community engagement in schools by awarding two Family and Community Engagement subgrants in Year 2. Indian River School District will create an educational series called "Student Success STEMs from Parental Support," and Seaford School District will open an evening Homework Center as part of a broader Family Resources Center. An additional six Family and Community Engagement subgrants were awarded in July 2012. The State intends to scale up the process for Family and Community Engagement subgrants to other reform areas as well, thereby enabling it to accelerate or sustain promising initiatives from LEA Scopes of Work.

20 schools. Together, principals and SLCs develop 100-day plans to develop, assess, and measure improvement work that must occur at each school. SLCs issue weekly progress reports about each school. SLCs will continue to provide light coaching in Year 3, as well as full support to 20 new schools.

DDOE's Professional Development (PD) Certification System is used to review LEA professional development plans to ensure that they are high-quality and high-impact. Through ongoing evaluation and analysis, DDOE will measure and track the impact of professional development on student and teacher outcomes. In Year 2, the PD Certification System automated processes such as professional development registration, which allows DDOE and LEAs to easily track participation. DDOE requires LEAs to submit professional development plans for approval each year, and will use PD Certification System data to inform its process for Year 3 and beyond.

## Successes, challenges, and lessons learned

In Year 2, Delaware evaluated its teachers based on its revised evaluation system, DPAS II. For ELA and mathematics teachers in grades 3-10, DPAS II scores included Component V. DDOE needed more time to develop growth measures for non-DCAS subjects and thus all other teachers will not receive a Component V score that contributes to their evaluation until Year 3. DDOE finished developing Component V measures for non-tested grades and subjects in Year 2, bringing together over 250 educators to create and review the assessments. Delaware worked to ensure that all educators understand the new measures, including hosting four-member teams from each school for a full-day training session in summer 2012.

# Great Teachers and Leaders

Select top-performing Delaware teachers and schools earned performance bonuses in Year 2. The Talent Retention Bonus Program, although behind schedule, was launched in spring 2012 and 24 teachers and four school leaders were awarded bonuses through the program. Five schools earned Academic Achievement Awards of \$150,000. DDOE also laid the groundwork to reward and support highly effective teachers who move to low-performing schools through the Talent Transfer Initiative, which it expects to launch in Year 3 after a year-long delay.

New teacher pipelines and alternative route to certification programs aim to increase the flow of effective teachers into Delaware. The DTMP provided a teacher pipeline and other supports for five charter schools and DDOE took key steps toward launching a statewide educator recruitment portal and statewide talent management website. Six principals completed a DLP residency that prepared them for placement in low-achieving schools in Year 3, and DDOE met its TFA target by having 27 TFA teachers teach in Delaware schools in Year 2. However, DTF and the STEM Residency Program fell short of their goals, resulting in Delaware's

plan to expand its other programs and explore other options to meet its overall targets for alternative certification. DDOE will evaluate and reassess its strategy to ensure that its alternative certification programs are producing effective teachers.

Delaware supported professional development effectiveness through the PD Certification System and the Vision Network. The PD Certification System launched in Year 2, and its link to teacher effectiveness data will allow Delaware to assess the effectiveness of professional development initiatives statewide in Year 3 and beyond. The Vision Network facilitated the spread of best practices between its 26 member schools. In addition, SAMs and SLCs supported effective principal leadership through hands-on supports such as time-tracking training and leadership coaching.

Due to delays with full implementation of Component V, it was challenging for the State to stay on track with its Talent Transfer Initiative, Talent Retention Bonus Program, teacher preparation reform work, and several additional related projects. DDOE is working diligently to move these projects forward and is focusing resources to get them back on track.

## Turning Around the Lowest-Achieving Schools

Race to the Top States are supporting LEAs' implementation of far-reaching reforms to turn around lowest-achieving schools by implementing one of four school intervention models.<sup>9</sup>

### Partnership Zone (PZ) schools

Delaware based its intervention efforts in low-performing schools around its PZ. The State funds PZ schools, identified by the State as its lowest-achieving, through a combination of Race to the Top funds, School Improvement Grants (SIG), and State funding. With the assistance of the State's School Turnaround Unit (STU), PZ schools are required to implement one of four intervention models.

As of Year 2, the State approved ten PZ school intervention plans and signed a memorandum of understanding with each -- four in Round One in Year 1 and an additional six in the Round Two in Year 2. The six PZ schools selected in Year 2 plan to implement the transformation model during SY 2012-2013.

The four PZ schools that began implementation of the transformation model in Year 2 experienced early gains in student achievement. For example, DCAS data indicated that all Round One PZ schools showed improvement in ELA and mathematics scores in spring 2012 as compared to spring 2011. Additionally, PZ schools require that students participate in post-assessment conferences to discuss their results. Thus, students are able to take ownership of their learning by analyzing assessment results and developing a better understanding of their performance.

DDOE participated in the RSN's Race to the Top School Turnaround Community of Practice and contributed to a recent publication on the PZ and the process for implementation. The document provided resources such as planning tools and promising practices for other States to use.

<sup>9</sup>Race to the Top States' plans include supporting their LEAs in turning around the lowest-achieving schools by implementing one of the four school intervention models:

- **Turnaround model:** Replace the principal and hire no more than 50 percent of the staff and grant the principal sufficient operational flexibility (including in staffing, calendars/time and budgeting) to fully implement a comprehensive approach to substantially improve student outcomes.
- **Restart model:** Convert a school or close and reopen it under a charter school operator, a charter management organization, or an education management organization that has been selected through a rigorous review process.
- **School closure:** Close a school and enroll the students who attended that school in other schools in the district that are higher achieving.
- **Transformation model:** Implement each of the following strategies: (1) replace the principal and take steps to increase teacher and school leader effectiveness, (2) institute comprehensive instructional reforms, (3) increase learning time and create community-oriented schools, and (4) provide operational flexibility and sustained support.



# Turning Around the Lowest-Achieving Schools

## Supporting school leadership

In Year 2, the STU provided technical assistance and guidance to the four schools that began to implement a school intervention model in SY 2011-2012. In an effort to reach all potential stakeholders, STU staff also attended LEA PZ Advisory Board meetings, PZ Council meetings at two of the four schools, and local board of education meetings. As a result of its work with these four schools, DDOE reported that the schools are on track with the implementation of their intervention models.

In addition to providing technical assistance and guidance to the four Round One schools, the STU worked extensively with the six Round Two schools to develop detailed implementation plans. The STU also assisted each school with early implementation activities such as identifying teaching staff and completing instructional time audits. All six schools are on schedule to fully implement their plans in SY 2012-2013.

The STU developed tools and procedures to monitor each PZ school's progress and quality of implementation. The STU required each school to create a detailed project plan with clear targets and objectives for implementing its intervention model. In addition, the STU required each school to provide mid-year and end-of-year PZ report cards that identify the school's accomplishments and areas for improvement.

DDOE used a PZ school dashboard to compare each PZ school's performance with that of the schools in the rest of the State. The dashboard also provided data that PZ schools needed to make informed decisions on ways to improve student achievement. During Year 2, the STU monitored leading student performance indicators in the four Round One schools. It also had weekly check-ins with the six Round Two schools to ensure that they were on track to implement in SY 2012-2013.

## Successes, challenges, and lessons learned

Delaware made progress on all of its efforts associated with the PZ initiative. In Year 2, the State developed tools, processes, and methods to monitor each PZ school's progress and implementation quality. It guided four schools through early implementation and selected six additional schools that are on track to begin implementation in Year 3. The STU provided a strong support system for the PZ schools, and the schools experienced early successes in implementation due to the structures and accountability that were put in place. The original three members of the STU transitioned out of DDOE during Year 2, and DDOE has hired a new team to take over the work.

# Emphasis on Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM)

## State's STEM initiatives

The STEM Council, a diverse group of stakeholders and educators from across the State that researches innovative projects and best practices in STEM teaching and learning, met quarterly in Year 2. In April 2012, the Council released a comprehensive report on the status of Delaware's STEM initiatives. The report included timelines and recommendations that will guide Delaware's STEM work in the coming years. A July 2012 STEM institute provided training to administrators, members of the business community, and teachers on STEM instruction, featured informational sessions about STEM program opportunities, and focused on raising educator awareness of the Next Generation Science Standards.

DDOE partnered with the University of Delaware to create the STEM Residency Program. This teacher preparation pathway for aspiring teachers includes recruitment, pre-service training, and one-year residency placements. The program targets candidates with strong content or professional backgrounds in STEM disciplines. Upon completing the program, residents receive a Masters of Arts in Teaching and are placed in traditionally hard-to-staff schools. The State placed a second cohort of STEM Residency Program residents in Year 2 and began selecting a third cohort of residents for Year 3.

## Successes, challenges, and lessons learned

In Year 2, the STEM Council released a comprehensive report on the status of Delaware's STEM initiatives. Despite its Year 2 progress, the STEM Council faced some governance challenges that impacted its ability to be maximally effective. Together with the Governor's office and through additional staff, DDOE is working to improve the progress of the STEM Council's work.

The State placed STEM Residency Program residents in Year 2 and began selecting residents for Year 3. Although feedback indicated that LEAs viewed the program positively, the program was not able to meet its established recruitment targets. DDOE is looking to expand other programs in order to meet its overall goals for certifying teachers through alternative routes (see *Great Teachers and Leaders*).



## Looking Ahead to Year 3

Delaware will build on the foundation from Years 1 and 2 to fully implement several key initiatives in Year 3. For the first time, all classroom teachers in the State will receive a DPAS II evaluation that includes the student growth component, Component V. The State's completion of Component V development will enable it to launch other initiatives in Year 3, such as the Talent Transfer Initiative and Teacher Preparation Improvement grants.

The State will also support its educators to fully implement the CCSS in Year 3. To encourage high-quality implementation, DDOE will continue to strengthen its CCSS implementation plan and develop and distribute additional educator resources. Delaware will continue to contribute to Smarter Balanced's efforts to develop new assessments for SY 2014-2015, and encourage college and career readiness through its Middle School Preparation Program.

Year 3 will be the first year that the Education Insight Portal will be available to all educators. The State hopes that this availability will encourage more educators to use the dashboards that are available through the Education Insight Portal. In addition, DDOE will work with LEAs and communicate with educators in order to further encourage dashboard use and promote awareness of the system's features. In Year 3, Delaware will collect feedback on the Education Insight Portal and many other initiatives as part of its commitment to continuous improvement.

Delaware will continue to support progress in low-achieving schools through the PZ, and, in Year 3, six schools will implement the transformation model based on the plans they developed with the STU in Year 2.

## Budget

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For the State's expenditures through June 30, 2012, please see the APR at [www.rtt-apr.us](http://www.rtt-apr.us).

For State budget information, see <http://www2.ed.gov/programs/racetothetop/state-scope-of-work/index.html>.

For the State's fiscal accountability and oversight report, please see <http://www2.ed.gov/programs/racetothetop/performance.html>.

# Glossary

**Alternative routes to certification:** Pathways to certification that are authorized under the State's laws or regulations that allow the establishment and operation of teacher and administrator preparation programs in the State, and that have the following characteristics (in addition to standard features such as demonstration of subject-matter mastery, and high-quality instruction in pedagogy and in addressing the needs of all students in the classroom including English learners and students with disabilities): (a) can be provided by various types of qualified providers, including both institutions of higher education and other providers operating independently from institutions of higher education; (b) are selective in accepting candidates; (c) provide supervised, school-based experiences and ongoing support such as effective mentoring and coaching; (d) significantly limit the amount of coursework required or have options to test out of courses; and (e) upon completion, award the same level of certification that traditional preparation programs award upon completion.

**Amendment requests:** In the event that adjustments are needed to a State's approved Race to the Top plan, the grantee must submit an amendment request to the Department for consideration. Such requests may be prompted by an updated assessment of needs in that area, revised cost estimates, lessons learned from prior implementation efforts, or other circumstances. Grantees may propose revisions to goals, activities, timelines, budget, or annual targets, provided that the following conditions are met: the revisions do not result in the grantee's failure to comply with the terms and conditions of this award and the program's statutory and regulatory provisions; the revisions do not change the overall scope and objectives of the approved proposal; and the Department and the grantee mutually agree in writing to the revisions. The Department has sole discretion to determine whether to approve the revisions or modifications. If approved by the Department, a letter with a description of the amendment and any relevant conditions will be sent notifying the grantee of approval. (For additional information please see <http://www2.ed.gov/programs/racetothetop/amendments/index.html>.)

**America COMPETES Act elements:** The twelve indicators specified in section 6401(e)(2)(D) of the America COMPETES Act are: (1) a unique statewide student identifier that does not permit a student to be individually identified by users of the system; (2) student-level enrollment, demographic, and program participation information; (3) student-level information about the points at which students exit, transfer in, transfer out, drop out, or complete P-16 education programs; (4) the capacity to communicate with higher education data systems; (5) a State data audit system assessing data quality, validity, and reliability; (6) yearly test records of individual students with respect to assessments under section 1111(b) of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) (20 U.S.C. 6311(b)); (7) information on students not tested by grade and

subject; (8) a teacher identifier system with the ability to match teachers to students; (9) student-level transcript information, including information on courses completed and grades earned; (10) student-level college-readiness test scores; (11) information regarding the extent to which students transition successfully from secondary school to postsecondary education, including whether students enroll in remedial coursework; and (12) other information determined necessary to address alignment and adequate preparation for success in postsecondary education.

**American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA):** On February 17, 2009, President Obama signed into law the ARRA, historic legislation designed to stimulate the economy, support job creation, and invest in critical sectors, including education. The Department of Education received a \$97.4 billion appropriation.

**Annual Performance Report (APR):** Report submitted by each grantee with outcomes to date, performance against the measures established in its application, and other relevant data. The Department uses data included in the APRs to provide Congress and the public with detailed information regarding each State's progress on meeting the goals outlined in its application. The final State APRs are found at [www.rtt-apr.us](http://www.rtt-apr.us).

**College- and career-ready standards:** State-developed standards that build toward college and career readiness by the time students graduate from high school.

**Common Core State Standards (CCSS):** Kindergarten through twelfth grade (K-12) English language arts and mathematics standards developed in collaboration with a variety of stakeholders including States, governors, chief State school officers, content experts, teachers, school administrators, and parents. The standards establish clear and consistent goals for learning that will prepare America's children for success in college and careers. As of December 2011, the CCSS were adopted by 45 States and the District of Columbia.

The **education reform areas** for Race to the Top: (1) Standards and Assessments: Adopting rigorous college- and career-ready standards and assessments that prepare students for success in college and career; (2) Data Systems to Support Instruction: Building data systems that measure student success and support educators and decision-makers in their efforts to improve instruction and increase student achievement; (3) Great Teachers and Great Leaders: Recruiting, developing, retaining, and rewarding effective teachers and principals; and (4) Turning Around the Lowest-Achieving Schools: Supporting LEAs' implementation of far-reaching reforms to turn around lowest-achieving schools by implementing school intervention models.

**Effective teacher:** A teacher whose students achieve acceptable rates (e.g., at least one grade level in an academic year) of student growth

(as defined in the Race to the Top requirements). States, LEAs, or schools must include multiple measures, provided that teacher effectiveness is evaluated, in significant part, by student growth (as defined in the Race to the Top requirements). Supplemental measures may include, for example, multiple observation-based assessments of teacher performance.

**High-minority school:** A school designation defined by the State in a manner consistent with its Teacher Equity Plan. The State should provide, in its Race to the Top application, the definition used.

**High-poverty school:** Consistent with section 1111(h)(1)(C)(viii) of the ESEA, a school in the highest quartile of schools in the State with respect to poverty level, using a measure of poverty determined by the State.

**Highly effective teacher:** A teacher whose students achieve high rates (e.g., one and one-half grade levels in an academic year) of student growth (as defined in the Race to the Top requirements). States, LEAs, or schools must include multiple measures, provided that teacher effectiveness is evaluated, in significant part, by student growth (as defined in the Race to the Top requirements). Supplemental measures may include, for example, multiple observation-based assessments of teacher performance or evidence of leadership roles (which may include mentoring or leading professional learning communities) that increase the effectiveness of other teachers in the school or LEA.

**Instructional improvement systems (IIS):** Technology-based tools and other strategies that provide teachers, principals, and administrators with meaningful support and actionable data to systemically manage continuous instructional improvement, including such activities as instructional planning; gathering information (e.g., through formative assessments (as defined in the Race to the Top requirements), interim assessments (as defined in the Race to the Top requirements), summative assessments, and looking at student work and other student data); analyzing information with the support of rapid-time (as defined in the Race to the Top requirements) reporting; using this information to inform decisions on appropriate next instructional steps; and evaluating the effectiveness of the actions taken. Such systems promote collaborative problem-solving and action planning; they may also integrate instructional data with student-level data such as attendance, discipline, grades, credit accumulation, and student survey results to provide early warning indicators of a student's risk of educational failure.

**Invitational priorities:** Areas of focus that the Department invited States to address in their Race to the Top applications. Applicants did not earn extra points for addressing these focus areas, but many grantees chose to create and fund activities to advance reforms in these areas.

**Involved LEAs:** LEAs that choose to work with the State to implement those specific portions of the State's plan that necessitate full or nearly-full statewide implementation, such as transitioning to a common set of K-12 standards (as defined in the Race to the Top requirements). Involved LEAs do not receive a share of the 50 percent of a State's grant award that it must subgrant to LEAs in accordance with section 14006(c) of the ARRA, but States may provide other funding to involved LEAs under the State's Race to the Top grant in a manner that is consistent with the State's application.

**Participating LEAs:** LEAs that choose to work with the State to implement all or significant portions of the State's Race to the Top plan, as specified in each LEA's agreement with the State. Each participating LEA that receives funding under Title I, Part A will receive a share of the 50 percent of a State's grant award that the State must subgrant to LEAs, based on the LEA's relative share of Title I, Part A allocations in the most recent year at the time of the award, in accordance with section 14006(c) of the ARRA. Any participating LEA that does not receive funding under Title I, Part A (as well as one that does) may receive funding from the State's other 50 percent of the grant award, in accordance with the State's plan.

**The Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC):** One of two consortia of States awarded grants under the Race to the Top Assessment program to develop next-generation assessment systems that are aligned to common K-12 English language and mathematics standards and that will accurately measure student progress toward college and career readiness. (For additional information please see <http://www.parcconline.org/>.)

**Persistently lowest-achieving schools:** As determined by the State, (i) any Title I school in improvement, corrective action, or restructuring that (a) is among the lowest-achieving five percent of Title I schools in improvement, corrective action, or restructuring or the lowest-achieving five Title I schools in improvement, corrective action, or restructuring in the State, whichever number of schools is greater; or (b) is a high school that has had a graduation rate as defined in 34 CFR 200.19(b) that is less than 60 percent over a number of years; and (ii) any secondary school that is eligible for, but does not receive, Title I funds that (a) is among the lowest-achieving five percent of secondary schools or the lowest-achieving five secondary schools in the State that are eligible for, but do not receive, Title I funds, whichever number of schools is greater; or (b) is a high school that has had a graduation rate as defined in 34 CFR 200.19(b) that is less than 60 percent over a number of years. To identify the lowest-achieving schools, a State must take into account both (i) the academic achievement of the "all students" group in a school in terms of proficiency on the State's assessments under section 1111(b)(3) of the ESEA in reading/language arts and mathematics combined; and (ii) the school's lack of progress on those assessments over a number of years in the "all students" group. (For additional information please see <http://www2.ed.gov/programs/sif/index.html>.)

**Qualifying evaluation systems:** Educator evaluation systems that meet the following criteria: rigorous, transparent, and fair evaluation systems for teachers and principals that: (a) differentiate effectiveness using multiple rating categories that take into account data on student growth as a significant factor, and (b) are designed and developed with teacher and principal involvement.

**Reform Support Network (RSN):** In partnership with the ISU, the RSN offers collective and individualized technical assistance and resources to grantees of the Race to the Top education reform initiative. The RSN's purpose is to support the Race to the Top grantees as they implement reforms in education policy and practice, learn from each other and build their capacity to sustain these reforms.

The **School Improvement Grants (SIG)** program is authorized under section 1003(g) of Title I of the ESEA. Funds are awarded to States to help them turn around persistently lowest-achieving schools. (For additional information please see <http://www2.ed.gov/programs/sif/index.html>.)

**School intervention models:** A State's Race to the Top plan describes how it will support its LEAs in turning around the lowest-achieving schools by implementing one of the four school intervention models:

- **Turnaround model:** Replace the principal and rehire no more than 50 percent of the staff and grant the principal sufficient operational flexibility (including in staffing, calendars/time and budgeting) to fully implement a comprehensive approach to substantially improve student outcomes.
- **Restart model:** Convert a school or close and reopen it under a charter school operator, a charter management organization, or an education management organization that has been selected through a rigorous review process.
- **School closure:** Close a school and enroll the students who attended that school in other schools in the district that are higher achieving.
- **Transformation model:** Implement each of the following strategies: (1) replace the principal and take steps to increase teacher and school leader effectiveness, (2) institute comprehensive instructional reforms, (3) increase learning time and create community-oriented schools, and (4) provide operational flexibility and sustained support.

**Single sign-on:** A user authentication process that permits a user to enter one name and password in order to access multiple applications.

The **SMARTER Balanced Assessment Consortium (Smarter Balanced):** One of two consortia of States awarded grants under the Race to the Top Assessment program to develop next-generation assessment systems that are aligned to common K-12 English language and mathematics standards and that will accurately measure student progress toward college

and career readiness. (For additional information please see <http://www.k12.wa.us/SMARTER/default.aspx>.)

The **State Scope of Work:** A detailed document for the State project that reflects the grantee's approved Race to the Top application. The State Scope of Work includes items such as the State's specific goals, activities, timelines, budgets, key personnel, and annual targets for key performance measures. (For additional information please see <http://www2.ed.gov/programs/racetothetop/state-scope-of-work/index.html>.) Additionally, all participating LEAs are required to submit Scope of Work documents, consistent with State requirements, to the State for its review and approval.

**Statewide longitudinal data systems (SLDS):** Data systems that enhance the ability of States to efficiently and accurately manage, analyze, and use education data, including individual student records. The SLDS help States, districts, schools, educators, and other stakeholders to make data-informed decisions to improve student learning and outcomes, as well as to facilitate research to increase student achievement and close achievement gaps. (For additional information please see [http://nces.ed.gov/Programs/SLDS/about\\_SLDS.asp](http://nces.ed.gov/Programs/SLDS/about_SLDS.asp).)

**Student achievement:** For the purposes of this report, student achievement (a) for tested grades and subjects is (1) a student's score on the State's assessments under the ESEA; and, as appropriate, (2) other measures of student learning, such as those described in paragraph (b) of this definition, provided they are rigorous and comparable across classrooms; and (b) for non-tested grades and subjects, alternative measures of student learning and performance such as student scores on pre-tests and end-of-course tests; student performance on English language proficiency assessments; and other measures of student achievement that are rigorous and comparable across classrooms.

**Student growth:** The change in student achievement (as defined in the Race to the Top requirements) for an individual student between two or more points in time. A State may also include other measures that are rigorous and comparable across classrooms.

**Value-added models (VAMs):** A specific type of growth model based on changes in test scores over time. VAMs are complex statistical models that generally attempt to take into account student or school background characteristics in order to isolate the amount of learning attributable to a specific teacher or school. Teachers or schools that produce more than typical or expected growth are said to "add value."